ROMANTICISM: The Artistic Expression of Liberalism

By: Susan M. Pojer
Horace Greeley HS Chappaqua, NY

The Spirit of the Age (1790–1850)

- A sense of a shared vision among the Romantics.
- Early support of the French Revolution.
- Rise of the individual → alienation.
- Dehumanization of industrialization.
- Radical poetics / politics → an obsession with violent change.

1. Emotions!

Passion!

Irrationality!

A Growing Distrust of Reason

Enlightenment → Early 19c ← Romanticism

Society is good, curbing violent impulses!

Civilization corrupts!

- The essence of human experience is subjective and emotional.
- Human knowledge is a puny thing compared to other great historical forces.
- "Individual rights" are dangerous efforts at selfishness → the community is more important.

The Romantic Movement

- Began in the 1790s and peaked in the 1820s.
- Mostly in Northern Europe, especially in Britain and Germany.
- A reaction against classicism.
- The "Romantic Hero:"
  - Greatest example was Lord Byron
  - Tremendously popular among the European reading public.
  - Youth imitated his haughtiness and rebelliousness.

Characteristics of Romanticism

The Engaged & Enraged Artist:

- The artist apart from society.
- The artist as social critic/revolutionary.
- The artist as genius.

Wandering Above the Sea of Fog

Caspar David Friedrich, 1818

Lady Macbeth – henry fuseli, 1794

2. The "Rugged" Individual

Characteristics of Romanticism

The Individual/ The Dreamer:

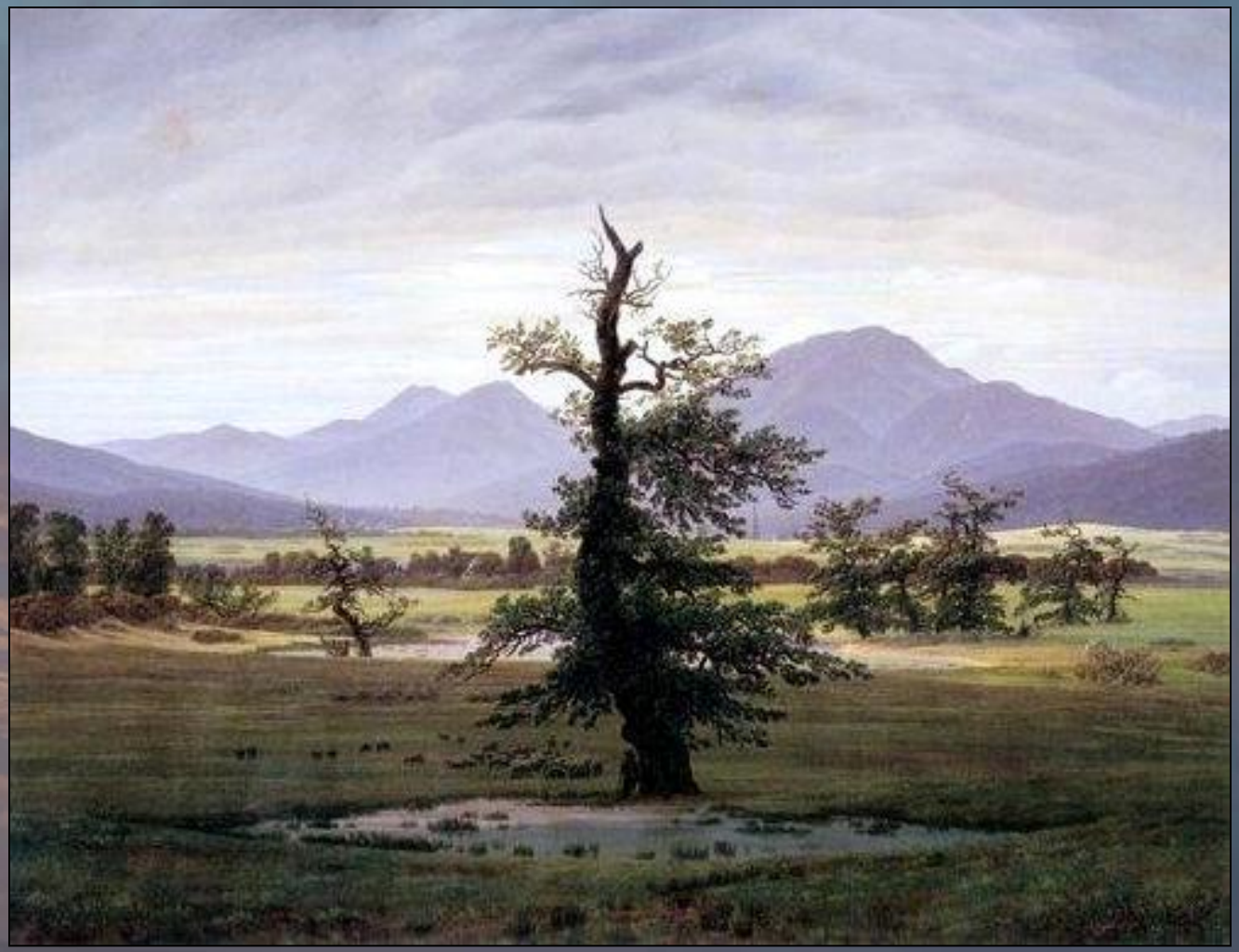
- Individuals have unique, endless potential.
- Self-realization comes through art
  - Artists are the true philosophers.

The Dreamer

Gaspar David Friedrich, 1835

Solitary Tree

Caspar David Friedrich, 1823



3. The Power & Fury of Nature

Characteristics of Romanticism

Glorification of Nature:

- Peaceful, restorative qualities [an escape from industrialization and the dehumanization it creates].
- Awesome, powerful, horrifying aspects of nature.
  - Indifferent to the fate of humans.
  - Overwhelming power of nature.

An Avalanche in the Alps
Philip James de Loutherbourg, 1803

Sunset After a Storm On the Coast of Sicily – Andreas Achenbach, 1853

The Deluge

Francis Danby, 1840

Tree of Crows

Caspar David Friedrich, 1822

The Wreck of the hope (aka The Sea of Ice)

Caspar David Friedrich, 1821

Shipwreck – Joseph Turner, 1805

The Raft of the Medusa

Théodore Géricault, 1819

The Eruption of Vesuvius – John Martin

4. Science Can Be Dangerous!

Isaac Newton – William Blake, 1795

Dr. Frankenstein's Adam & Eve??

5. The "New" Technology Is Dehumanizing

Rain, Steam, and Speed

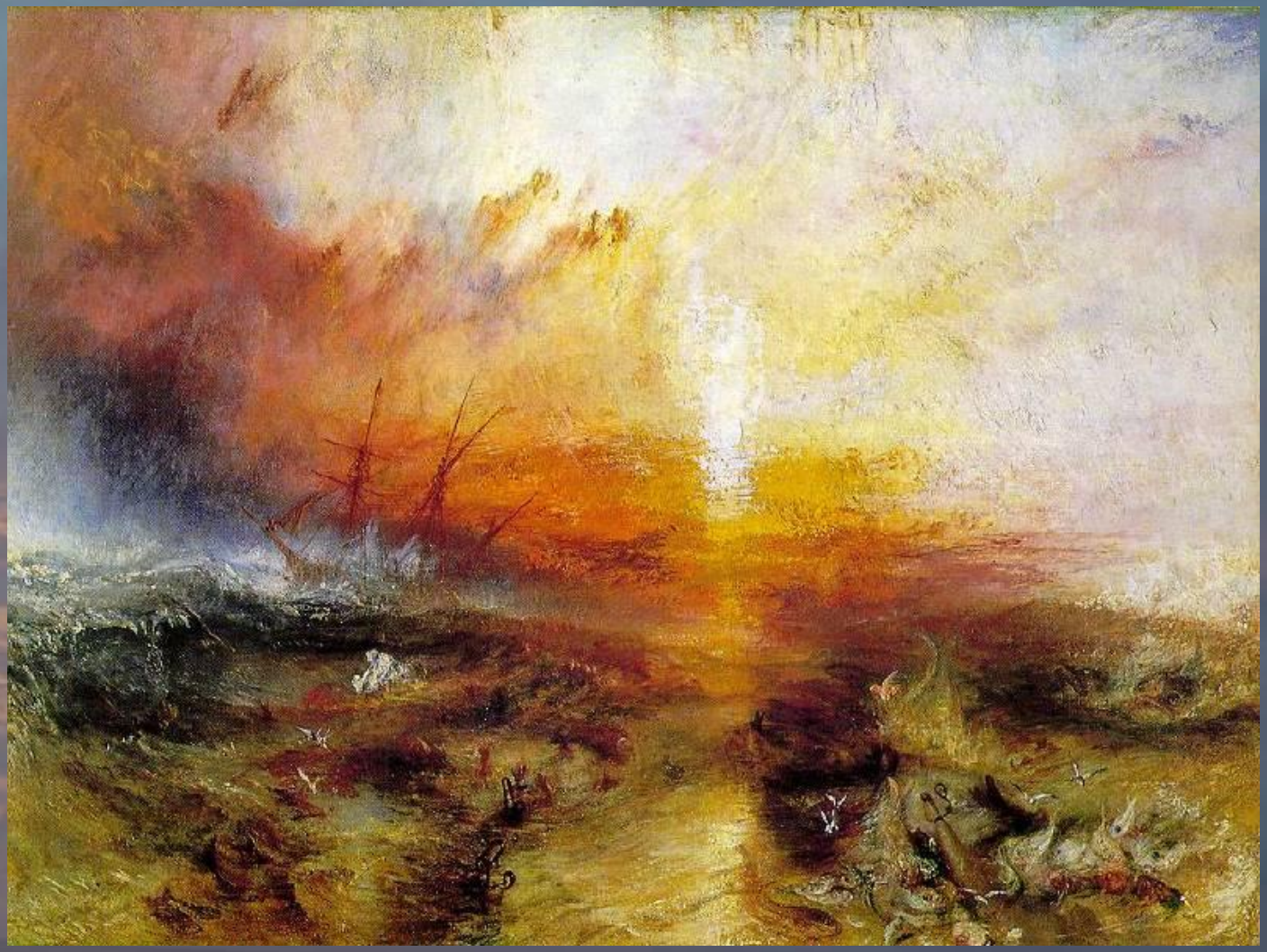
Joseph Mallord William Turner, 1844

Rain, Steam, & Speed

(details)

The Slave Ship

Joseph Mallord William Turner, 1842



The Slave Ship

(details)

6. Romanticizing Country Life

Flatford Mill – John Constable, 1817

The Corn Field

John Constable, 1826

The hay Wain – John Constable, 1821

7. The Gothic: "Romanticizing" the Middle Ages

Characteristics of Romanticism

Revival of Past Styles:

- Gothic & Romanesque revival.
- "Neo-Gothic" architectural style.
- Medieval ruins were a favorite theme for art and poetry.

Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Ground

John Constable, 1825

Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows

John Constable, 1831

hadleigh Castle – John Constable, 1829

Eldena Ruin

Gaspar David Friedrich, 1825

Winter Landscape with Church

Gaspar David Friedrich, 1811

British houses of Parliament 1840–1865

8. The Exotic, the Occult, and the Macabre!

Characteristics of Romanticism

The Supernatural:

- Ghosts, fairies, witches, demons.
- The shadows of the mind—dreams & madness.
- The romantics rejected materialism in pursuit of spiritual self-awareness.
- They yearned for the unknown and the unknowable.

Cloister Cemetery in the Snow
Caspar David Friedrich, 1817–1819

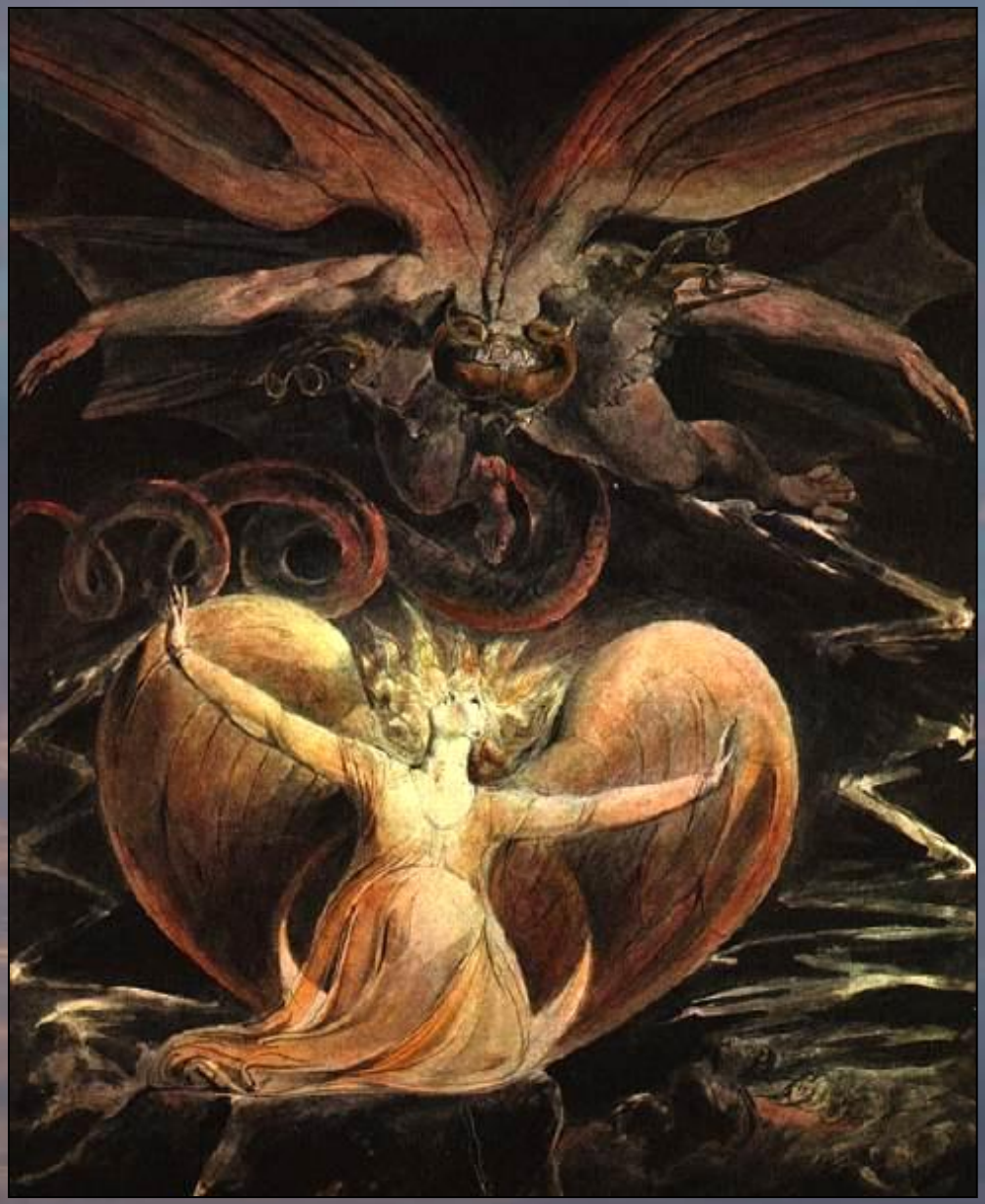
Abbey in an Oak Forest

Caspar David Friedrich, 1809–1810

Mad Woman With a Mania of Envy

Theodore Gericault, 1822–1823

Pity – William Blake, 1795



The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Sun

William Blake, 1808–1810

Stonehenge – John Constable, 1836

Nightmare (The Incubus)

henry fuseli, 1781

Manfred and the Witch of the Alps

John Martin – 1837

Witches Sabbath

Francisco Goya, 1798

Procession of Flagellants on Good Friday
Francisco Goya, 1793

Saturn Devours his Son

Francisco Goya, 1819–1823

9. Nationalism

Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi

Eugène Delacroix, 1827

Liberty Leading the People

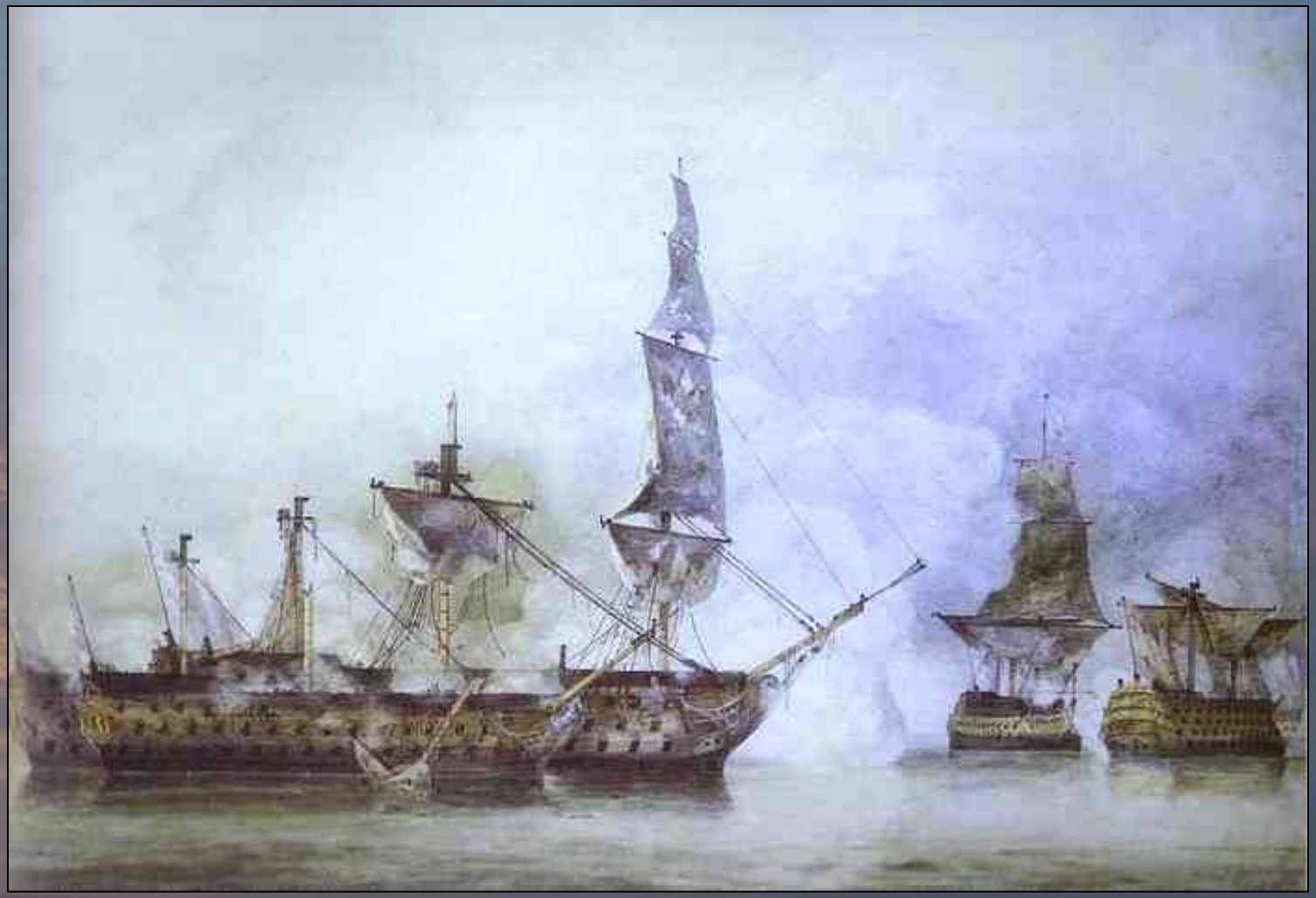
Eugène Delacroix, 1830

Detail of the Musket Bearer

Delacoix, himself

The Rise of the Cartheginian Empire
Joseph Turner, 1815

his Majesty's Ship, "Victory" (Trafalgar) – John Constable, 1806



An Officer of the Imperial horse Guard

Théodore Géricault, 1814

Napoleon at the St. Bernard Pass

David, 1803

The Shooting of May 3, 1808
Francisco Goya, 1815

Pandemonium – John Martin, 1841

10. Interest in Exotic Foreign Lands

Characteristics of Romanticism

Exoticism:

- The sexy "other."
- A sense of escape from reality.
- A psychological/moral justification of imperialism?

Grand Canal, Venice

Joseph Mallord William Turner, 1835

Massacre of Chios – Eugène Delacroix, 1824

The Fanatics of Tangiers

Eugène Delacroix, 1837–1838

The Sultan of Morocco and his Entourage

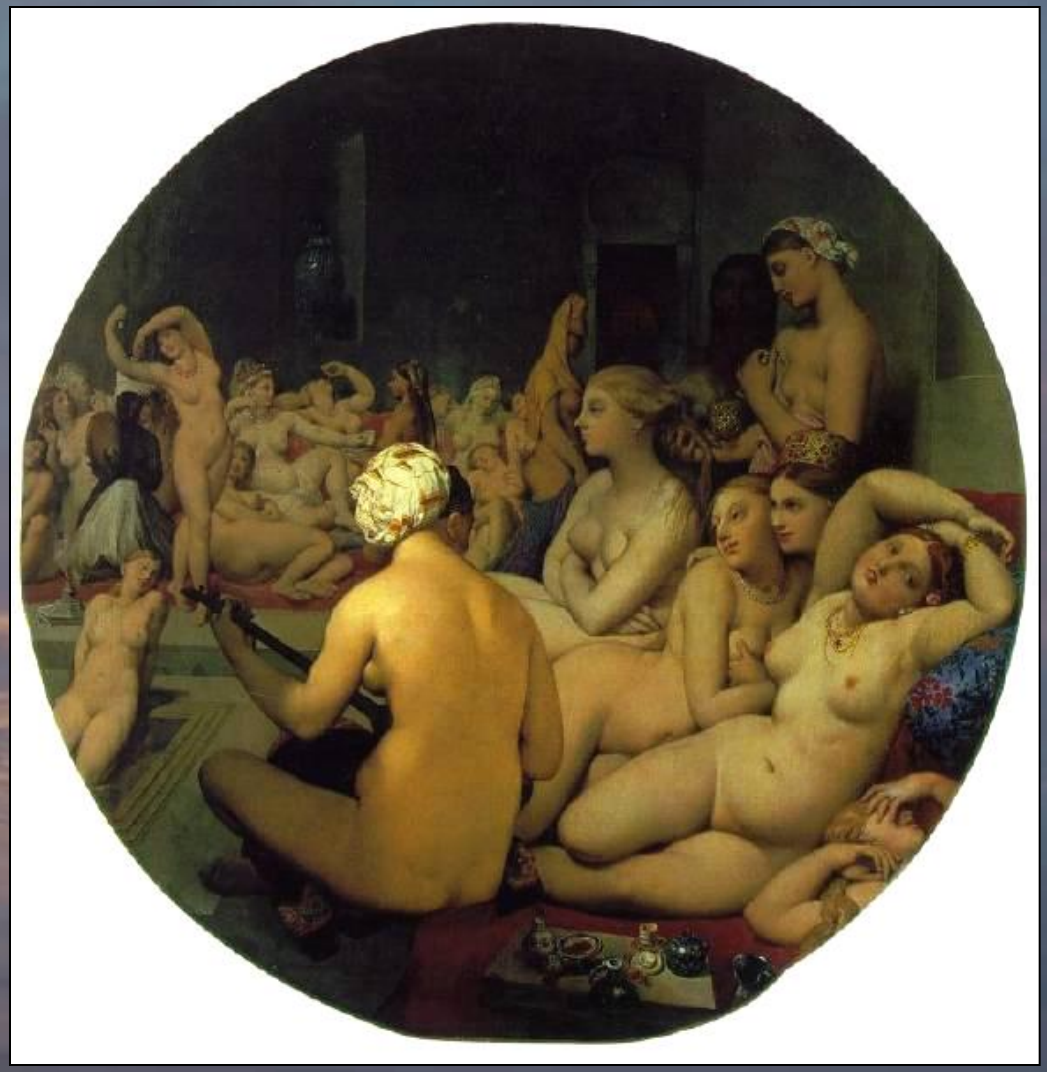
Eugène Delacroix, 1845

Women of Algiers in Their Apartment

Eugène Delacroix, 1834

The Turkish Bath

Jean Auguste Ingres, 1852–1863



The Bullfight – Francisco Goya

Charge of the Mamelukes, May 2nd, 1808

Francisco Goya, 1814

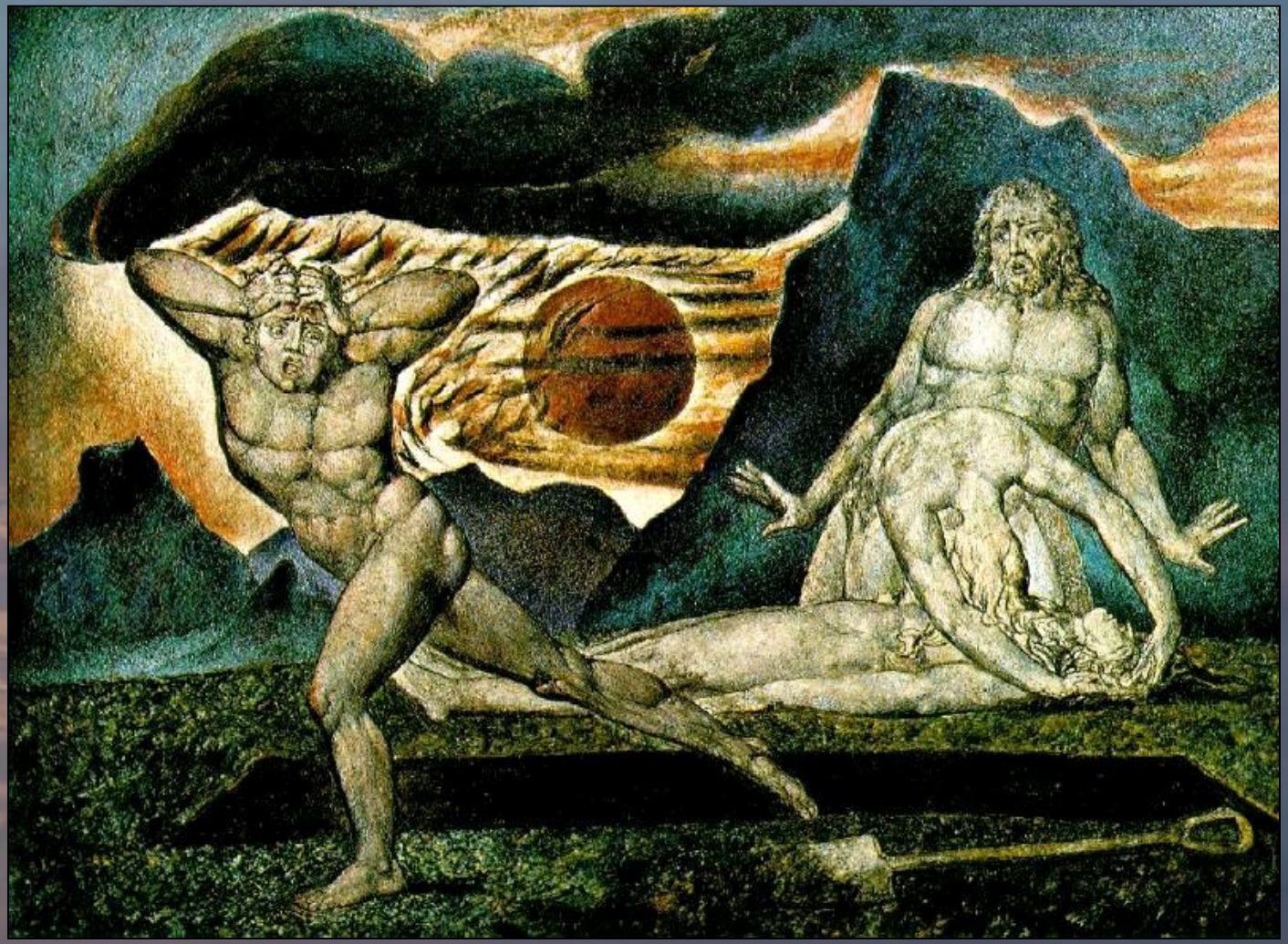
The Royal Pavillion at Brighton
John Nash, 1815–1823

11. Return to Christian Mysteries

God as the Architect – William Blake, 1794

Elohim Creating Abraham
William Blake, 1805

Body of Abel Found by Adam and Eve
William Blake, 1825



Faust and Mephistopheles
Eugène Delacroix, 1826–1827

The Seventh Plague of Egypt
John Martin, 1823

The Cathedral

Gaspar David Friedrich, 1818

The Cathedral (details)

Gaspar David Friedrich, 1818

The Great Age of the Novel

- Gothic Novel:

  Jane Eyre - Charlotte Bronte (1847)
  Wuthering Heights - Emily Bronte (1847)

- Historical Novel:

  Ivanhoe - Sir Walter Scott (1819)
  Les Miserables - Victor Hugo (1862)
  The Three Musketeers – Alexander Dumas (1844)

The Great Age of the Novel

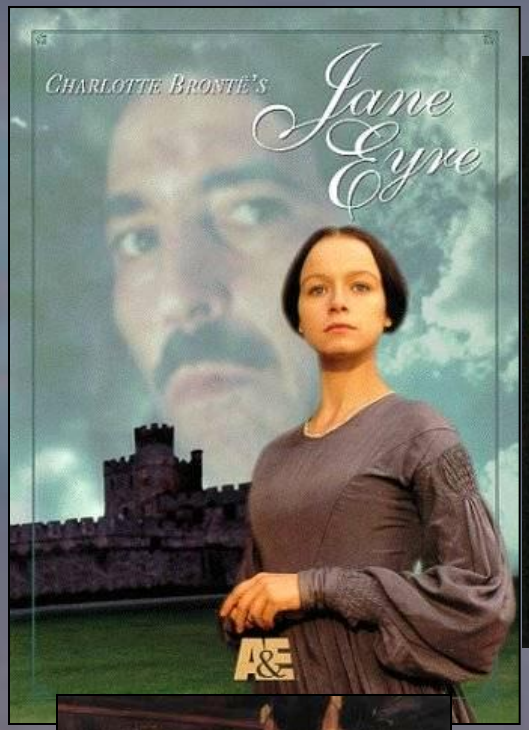
- <u>Science Fiction Novel</u>:

  Frankenstein - Mary Shelley (1817)

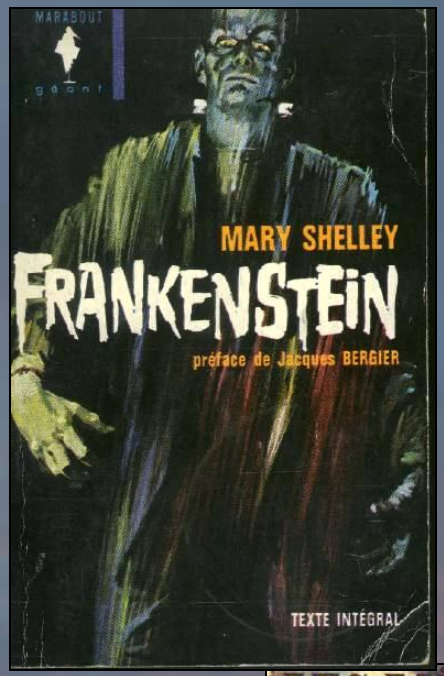
  Dracula – Bramm Stoker (1897)

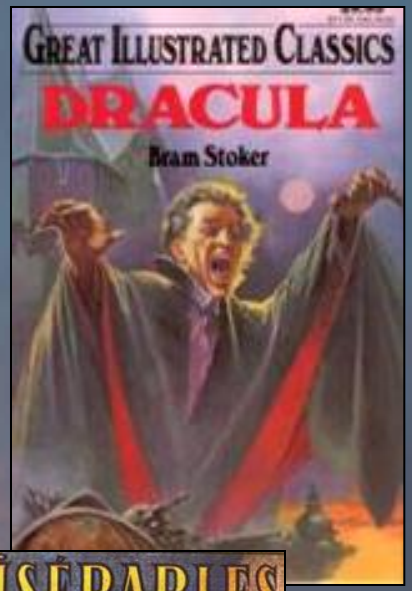
- <u>Novel of Purpose</u>:

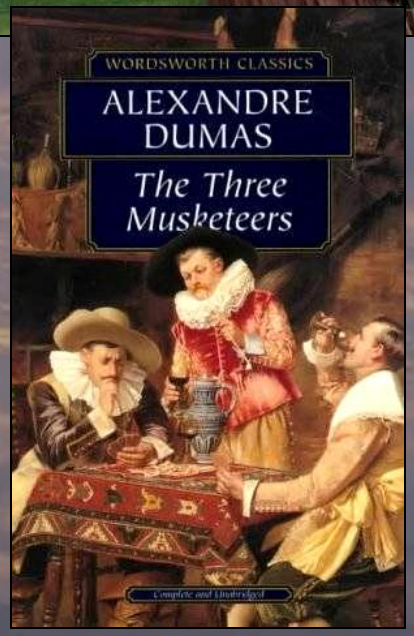
  Hugh Trevar - Thomas Holcroft (1794)


CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S
Jane Eyre
A&E

IVANHOE


MARABOUT
MARY SHELLEY
FRANKENSTEIN
préface de Jacques BERGIER
TEXTE INTÉGRAL


GREAT ILLUSTRATED CLASSICS
DRACULA
Bram Stoker

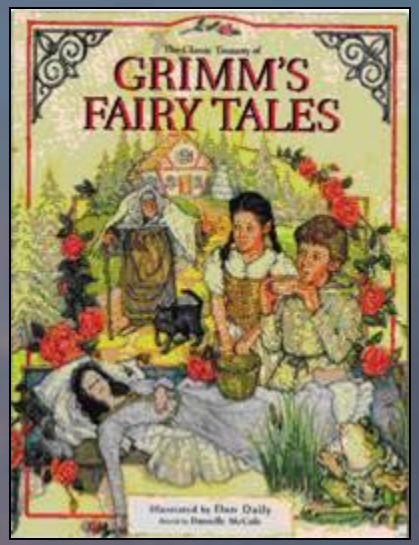

WORDSWORTH CLASSICS
ALEXANDRE DUMAS
The Three Musketeers
Complete and Unabridged

LES MISÉRABLES
D'APRÈS L'IMMORTEL CHEF-D'ŒUVRE DE
VICTOR-HUGO

Other Romantic Writers

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

- *Grimm's Fairy Tales* (1814-1816)



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

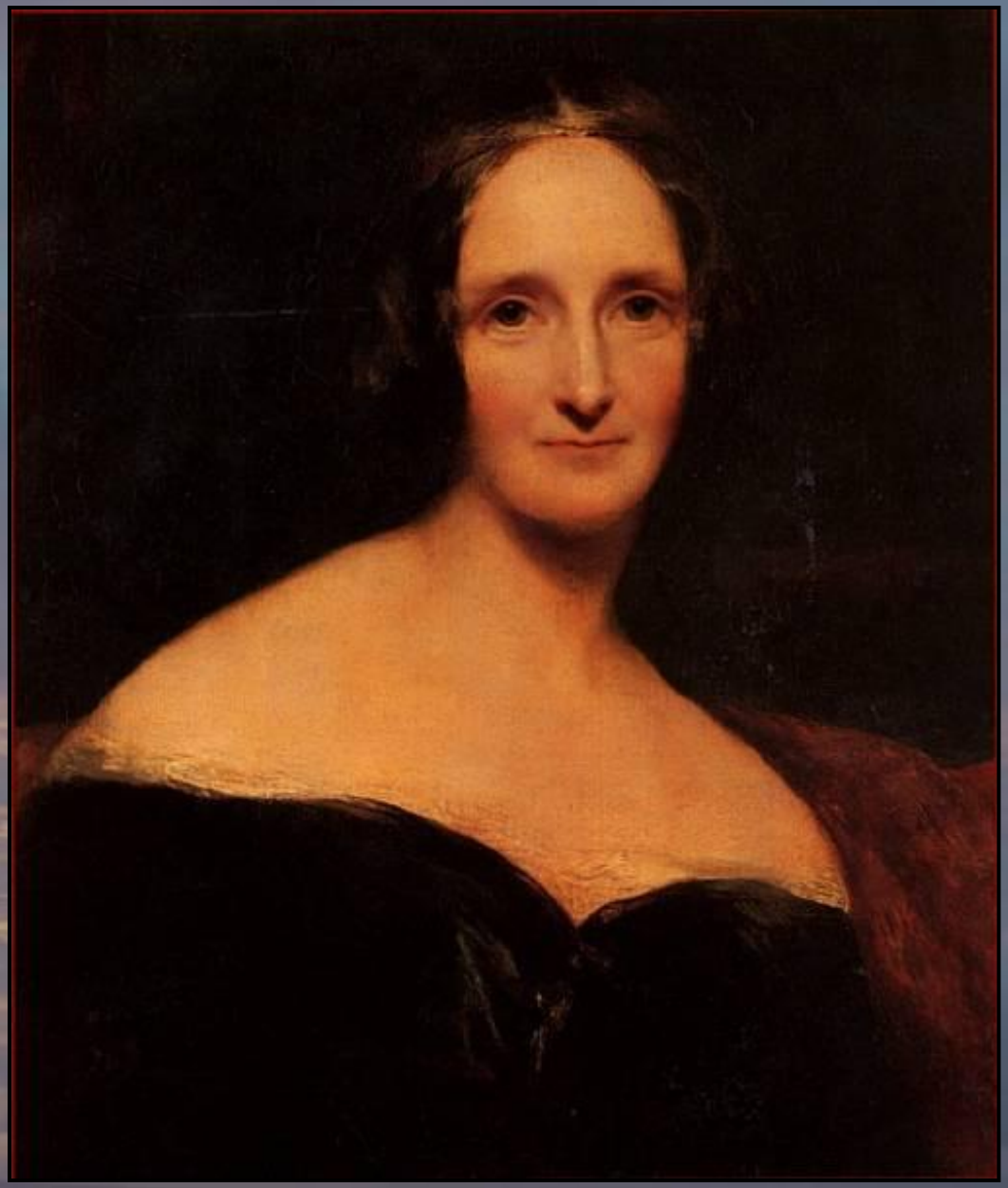
- *Faust* (1806-1832)

The Romantic Poets

- Percy Bysshe Shelley
- Lord Byron (George Gordon)
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- William Wordsworth
- John Keats
- William Blake

George Gordon's (Lord Byron) Poem

The Prisoner of Chillon

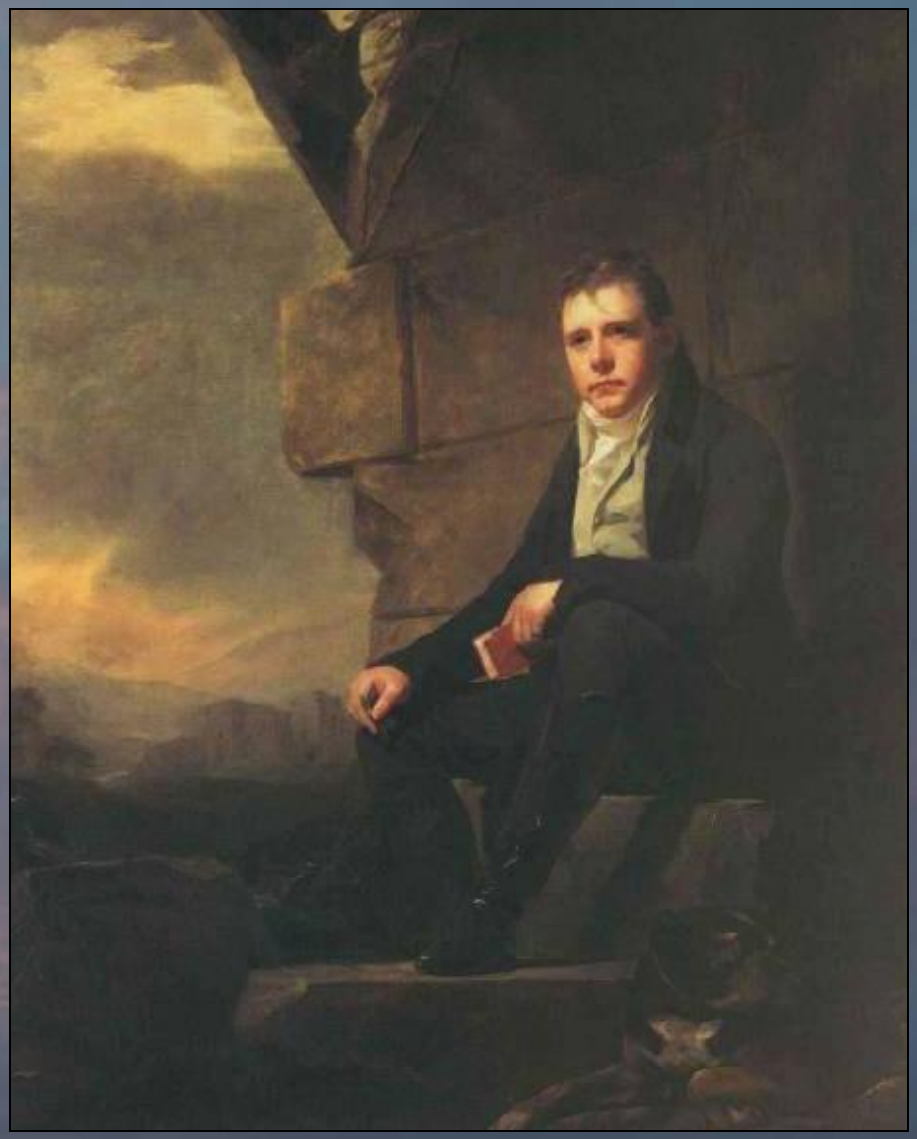


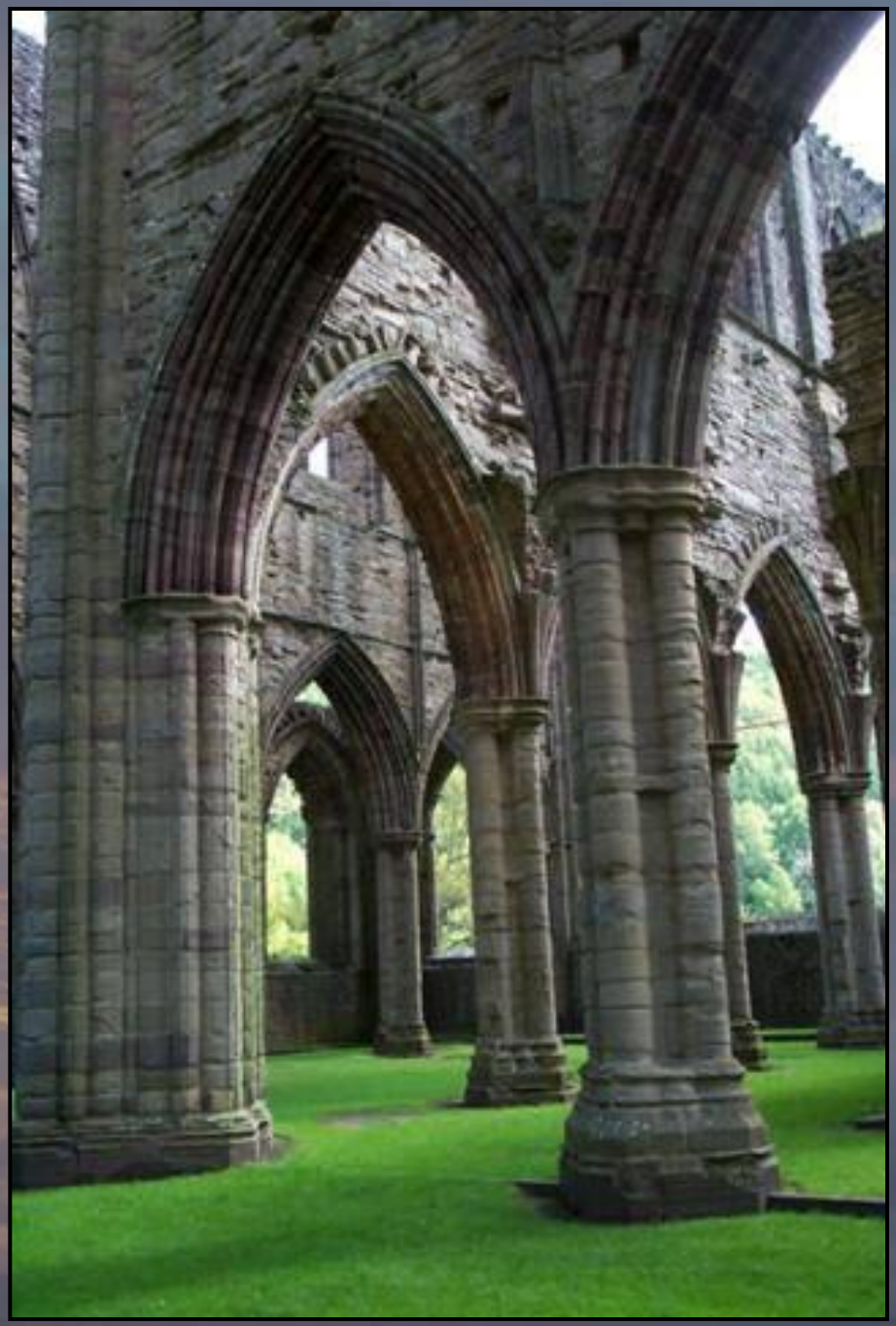
Mary Shelley

Frankenstein

Sir Walter Scott

Ivanhoe





William Wordsworth's Poem,

Tintern Abbey

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Poem,

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Romanticism: The Great Paradox

The Political Implications

- Romanticism could reinforce the greatest themes of political liberalism or political conservatism.
- Contributed to growing nationalist movements.
  - The concepts of the *Volk* and the *Volkgeist*.
  - The uniqueness of cultures was emphasized.

Bibliographic Sources

- *CGFA: A Virtual Art Museum.* http://cgfa.sunsite.dk/fineart.htm

- "Romanticism" on *Artchive.* http://artchive.com/artchive/romanticism.html